

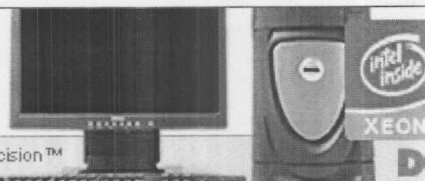


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Move Numbers within Filenames

February 17, 2004

By Neil J. Rubenking

I have a collection of audio books stored as MP3 files. The books are organized into folders, with tracks named in the format BookTitle_001.mp3, BookTitle_002.mp3, and so on. I just purchased a Cambridge SoundWorks CD radio that plays MP3s, but the radio only looks at the first eight characters of a filename to determine the order of play. The book titles are all longer than eight characters, so the radio plays tracks in random order. That's okay for music but impossible for a book. Is there a utility or method to help me batch rename all the book files to put the track numbers at the front?

Laurie Picard

Assuming you're running Windows 2000 or XP, you can do this at the command prompt with a single command. Navigate to the folder that contains your chapter files and carefully enter (or copy) this command:

```
FOR %v IN (*.mp3) DO FOR /F "tokens=1-3 delims=_" %i IN ("%v") DO RENAME "%v" "%j_%i.%k"
```

The initial FOR command selects all files that match the file specification *.mp3 and passes each in turn as the variable %v into the command after the DO keyword. There is a second FOR command, which parses each passed folder name into three tokens: the explicitly defined %i and the additional %j and %k, breaking the name at the delimiter characters underscore (_) and period (.). It then builds new filenames with the numeric portion first and renames the files, precisely as you requested. For example, Hamlet_012.mp3 is divided into Hamlet, 012, and mp3 and reassembled as 012_Hamlet.mp3.

If you want to observe what this command will do before actually renaming the files, simply insert the command ECHO before the RENAME command. The modified command line will display the rename commands that would be executed without actually making any changes, as the screen shot shows.

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